

male in female dress. It was shot near Rustenburg on 22nd July; the bill was noted by Mr. Ayres as "dark dusky ash," and the tarsi and feet as "ash-colour." I may add that the reference given under the head of this species in Sharpe's edition of Layard's 'Birds of South Africa' (p. 182), to Malherbe's monograph, vol. ii. *pl.* 165, is a misprint for *page* 165; Malherbe figures this Woodpecker, *pl.* 95. figs. 1 & 2, and calls it in his letterpress "Le Chrysopie de Bennett ou d'Abington."—J. H. G.]

DENDROPICUS NAMAQUUS (Licht.). Bearded Woodpecker.

Male and female. Irides bright garnet-colour; bill dusky, with the under mandible lighter; tarsi and feet pale dingy olive-green.

A scarce species amongst these mountains, and withal hard to get; they seem to prefer the mimosa trees whereon to search for food.

324. *JYNX PECTORALIS*, Vig. Southern Red-throated Wryneck.

Male and female, evidently a pair, shot 6th and 8th of July, at Rustenburg, where this species is very scarce. I do not remember to have seen it previously in the Transvaal.

[To be continued.]

XXIV.—On *Melaniparus semilarvatus*.

By T. SALVADORI, C.M.Z.S.

(Plate IX.)

MR. HUME, in 'Stray Feathers,' vol. vii. p. 458, writes of my *Melaniparus semilarvatus* as follows:—"There is a wretched species, No. 649 ter of my list, viz. *Melaniparus semilarvatus* of Salvadori, of which I have for years tried to obtain a description. At last I wrote to Salvadori himself; but he, though very kindly favouring me with all his more recent publications, will not come to the front about this particular species. I conclude it is a bad species."

To this public appeal I must answer:—

1st. That I have no doubt, as Mr. Hume says so, that he



JGKeulemans lith.

Hanhart imp

MELANIPARUS SEMILARVATUS

has written to me, asking for the description of my *Melaniparus semilarvatus*; but that, at the same time, I must state that I have not the least recollection of having received such a request.

2nd. That had I received Mr. Hume's request, it would have certainly given me pleasure to meet it, *as I have always done* in such cases.

3rd. That, simply because he had not access to my description, or had not received it from me, Mr. Hume, according to my opinion, had no right to think, nor to state publicly, that I do not wish to "come to the front" about this particular species.

4th. That I am not too jealous of my own species, and that more than once I have destroyed some of them myself, as the discovery of the truth is invariably the object of my scientific researches.

5th. That many ornithologists know from experience that I never refuse to send any species of mine to be examined; so that the assertion of Mr. Hume that I don't wish to "come to the front" about *Melaniparus semilarvatus* is quite gratuitous.

6th. That Mr. Hume, having no access to the description of my bird, had merely the right to say that he was not acquainted with it, but not to condemn it as a "wretched species," which is, as I believe, hardly a polite expression.

As to *Melaniparus semilarvatus* being a bad species, I shall leave Mr. Hume himself to judge after having seen the accompanying plate (Plate IX.), which the Editors of 'The Ibis' have most kindly agreed to publish.

My *Melaniparus semilarvatus* is a most distinct species of the group, on account of the white face. There is a very surprising likeness in the colouring between it and *Pentholæa albifrons* (Rüpp.), which also is black, and has a white patch on the forehead. But I don't suppose that I shall need to point out the differences between a *Pentholæa* of the family Saxicolidæ and a true *Melaniparus* of the Paridæ. Besides, I may mention that the white patch on the forehead of *P. albifrons* is only superior, and does not come down on the sides of the face.

As I have said in the original description of *M. semilarvatus*, the Museum of Turin possesses two typical specimens of it. These are marked in the catalogue as having been received from Baron Solaroli, together with many other Himalayan birds. But after the publication of my description, I had some suspicions that those two birds, in reality, had been given to the Museum of Turin by Baron Rollet, together with other Central-African birds, among which were specimens of *Pogonorrhynchus rolleti*, *P. leucocephalus*, and others described by De Filippi. I have no means of ascertaining the point positively; but I think that further researches will probably show that *Melaniparus semilarvatus* is an African bird; and if this is so, it will follow that all the members of the genus, or subgenus, *Melaniparus* are African*.

I think that the following species are to be included in the group *Melaniparus* :—

1. *MELANIPARUS SEMILARVATUS*, Salvad. Atti Soc. Ital. Sc. Nat. viii. p. 375 (1865); Id. Journ. für Orn. 1868, p. 68.

Hab. in Himalaja, an potius in Africa centrali? (*Mus. Aug. Taurin.*).

2. *MELANIPARUS LEUCONOTUS* (Guér.), Rev. Zool. 1873, p. 162.

Hab. in Abyssinia (*Galinier et Ferret, Heuglin*).

3. *MELANIPARUS NIGER* (Vieill.), Nouv. Dict. H. N. xx. p. 325 (1818), ex Levaillant.

Hab. in Africa meridionali (*Layard &c.*).

4. *MELANIPARUS LEUCOMELAS* (Rüpp.), Neue Wirbelth. Abyssin. p. 100, t. 37. f. 2 (1835).

Hab. in Africa orientali-septentrionali (*Rüppell &c.*) et occidentali (*Swainson*).

Vix a *M. nigro* diversus, paullo minor. Specimina Africæ

* The following circumstances lead me to believe that the two above-mentioned birds were not given by Solaroli, but most probably by Baron Rollet. 1st. They were catalogued along with the several hundred birds certainly given by Solaroli; 2nd. Both these specimens were marked in the catalogue in De Filippi's handwriting, like the other birds received from Baron Rollet.

occidentalis (*Parus leucopterus*, Swains.) cum speciminibus orientalibus omnino conveniunt.

5. MELANIPARUS FUNEREUS, J. et E. Verr. Journ. für Orn. 1865, p. 104.

Hab. in Gaboon (*Verreaux*).

6. MELANIPARUS RUFIVENTRIS (Bocage), Journ. Sc. Math. Phys. e Natur. n. xxii. (Extracto, p. 20) (1822).

Hab. in Angola (*Anchieta*).

XXV.—On the Systematic Position and Scientific Name of "*Le Perroquet mascarin*" of Brisson. By W. A. FORBES, M.B.O.U. &c.

DURING a visit to Paris last autumn in company with Mr. Selater and Dr. Hartlaub, I had an opportunity of seeing for the first time, in the gallery of the Museum of the Jardin des Plantes, one* of the two sole extant specimens of "*Le Perroquet mascarin*" of Brisson, the "*Coracopsis mascarina*" of most authors. This specimen is not improbably that described by Brisson, and is still in a fair state of preservation, though its wings and tail are rather damaged. On seeing it I was at once struck with several points in which it differed conspicuously from the other species usually placed in the genus *Coracopsis*; and after my return to England, at my request, Prof. Alphonse Milne-Edwards was kind enough to have life-sized sketches of the head and foot of this specimen made for me, which are here reproduced, all the figures we have of this species being more or less reduced in size. As will be seen from the drawing (fig. 1, p. 304), the beak in this species is very large and deep, not so compressed and elongated as in *Psittacus* or *Coracopsis*, but more like in shape that of a large-billed species of *Tanygnathus* or *Palæornis*. Moreover the beak is red†, as in most of the species of the two last-named genera; whereas in *Psittacus* or *Coracopsis* it is black, or

* The other is in the Vienna Museum (*cf.* Pelzeln, *Ibis*, 1873, p. 32).

† Du Bois (*cf.* *Ibis*, 1876, p. 286) calls it "couleur de feu."